



*Stephanie Rawlings-Blake*  
Mayor

## PLANNING COMMISSION

*Wilbur E. "Bill" Cunningham, Chairman*

### STAFF REPORT



*Thomas J. Stosur*  
Director

**August 29, 2013**

**REQUEST:** Minor Amendment & Final Design Approval/Gateway at Washington Hill PUD – “Area A”

**RECOMMENDATION:** Approval

**STAFF:** Natasha Becker

**PETITIONER:** JAG Washington Gateway LLC

**OWNER:** Same

#### **SITE/GENERAL AREA**

Site Conditions: The Washington Hill Gateway PUD is an 11+ acre site in East Baltimore comprised of three city blocks bounded by Orleans Street to the north, Baltimore Street to the south, Washington Street to the east, and Wolfe Street to the west. With the exception of a small portion along Orleans Street that is zoned B-3-2, the site is zoned R-8. “Area A” comprises the southernmost block of the PUD (between former bed of Fairmount Avenue Baltimore Street) and is approximately 2.5 acres in size.

General Area: The site lies immediately southeast of the Johns Hopkins medical campus and its newly constructed hospital building. The area to the south and east of the PUD is residential, with a predominance of row homes on the surrounding residential blocks.

#### **HISTORY**

- Ordinance #04-859, approved December 2, 2004, established the 1950 East Fayette Street, 1951 East Fayette Street and 1921-39 Orleans Street Planned Unit Development.
- Ordinance #09-136, approved March 12, 2009, is the first amendment to that PUD (renamed to “Gateway at Washington Hill”).
- On April 19, 2012, the Planning Commission approved a Minor Amendment and Final Design Approval for Area B of the PUD.
- On June 7, 2012, the Planning Commission approved a Minor Amendment and Final Design Approval for Area C of the PUD.

#### **CONFORMITY TO PLANS**

The request is consistent with Baltimore City’s Comprehensive Master Plan, specifically: LIVE Goal 1, Objective 1 (Expand housing choice for all residents); LIVE Goal 1, Objective 5

(Increase the City's population by 10,000 households in six years); LIVE Goal 2, Objective 1 (Improve the design quality of Baltimore's built environment).

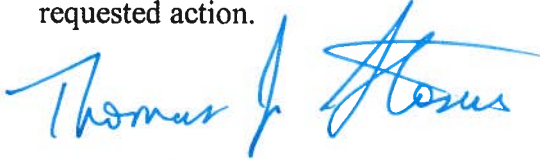
## ANALYSIS

Jefferson Apartment Group proposes to construct a 4-story multi-family apartment building on the property known as 1 North Wolfe Street. The project site corresponds to Area A of the Gateway at Washington Hill PUD and is bounded by Area B of the PUD to the north, Baltimore Street to the south, Washington Street to the east, and Wolfe Street to the west. The project is a complement to their phase one multi-family building, which has already been approved by the Planning Commission and is under construction immediately north of the subject site. The two projects are very similar in nature and share a common landscaped courtyard space. However, the phase two multi-family building is all residential, with 326 garage parking spaces, but no groundfloor retail (as is a component of the phase one building). It is to feature 210 market rate apartment units, ranging from 540 square foot efficiency units to 1,200 square foot 2-bedroom units. The proposal required site plan, urban design/architectural, and forest conservation reviews. It is also fully compliant with the Gateway at Washington Hill PUD.

- PUD Compliance: The Gateway at Washington Hill Planned Unit Development (PUD) is a residential PUD that permits a maximum of 1,261,906 total square feet (of which a maximum of 60,000 may be used for retail development) and 786 dwelling units. "Area B", currently under construction, is comprised of 556,148 square feet and contains 292 dwelling units. The remaining availability is 705,758 square feet and 494 dwelling units, of which "Area A" will consume 278,140 square feet and 209 dwelling units.
- Site Plan: The building will occupy the entirety of the block and will share a common landscaped courtyard space (to be known as Fairmount Mews) with the adjacent project under construction to the north. Vehicular access will be along North Wolfe Street and service loading along East Baltimore Street. The project has been reviewed and approved by the Site Plan Review Committee. An original plan showed a consolidated garage entrance, service loading, and electrical transformer access along East Baltimore Street (the latter two behind roll-up doors). Staff felt this created an unfriendly pedestrian experience and urged the developer to move parking access to Wolfe Street and to make the transformers accessible from inside the garage. The developer agreed to both requests, and current plans reflect this significant design change.
- Architecture: The basic design concept is that this Phase II project is a "cousin" to Phase I, with a distinctive difference in massing and materials. The scale of each façade has been broken down with varying roof lines, colors, and materials to give the appearance that they're composed of multiple separate buildings. The street wall is broken down with faces that do not align, creating ins and outs, which provide landscaping opportunities. While the majority of the units are accessed internally, there are others that have direct access from the street and which feature private stoops and balconies. The project has been reviewed by the Urban Design and Architectural Review Panel and got final approval on August 15, 2013.

- Landscaping: The project was large enough to trigger Forest Conservation, and the resulting afforestation requirement is 38 planting units. They will meet this requirement with 33 street trees and additional shrub plantings to make up the difference.
- Green Building Requirements: The development team is aware that their project triggers Baltimore City's Green Building requirements but has not determined whether they will follow the LEED or Baltimore City compliance path.

The Butchers Hill Association and Citizens for Washington Hill have been notified of the requested action.



**Thomas J. Stosur**  
**Director**